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DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-second session on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 4 June 1996, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-second session on the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (E/AC.51/1996/4, annex).

Discussion

2. Delegations welcomed the report and found that it provided an informative statement of progress made by UNHCR to implement the recommendations made by the Committee. Many delegations stressed that such reviews were evidence of the usefulness of the work of the Committee; the report showed that its recommendations had helped UNHCR in improving its effectiveness. Generally, delegations were satisfied with progress in the cooperation of UNHCR with other

programmes and agencies of the United Nations system and with implementing partners. Some delegations expressed concern, however, about the lack of coordination in the field of programme implementation at the country level between UNHCR and UNDP resident coordinators.

3. One delegation expressed its support for the work of the inter-agency task force on internally displaced persons, established in 1993, and urged it to reach a consensus on a better mode of distribution of tasks. Another delegation stated that the attention paid by UNHCR to regional approaches to durable solutions, involving further development agencies, had been found useful. One delegation considered that there was a need to define a methodology for action during conflicts and in the post-conflict period. One delegation expressed the view that the comprehensive approach followed at the recent conference of the Commonwealth of Independent States was a useful model which could be applied in other regions. Another delegation stressed the importance of international solidarity with the countries hosting refugees and the need to share their burden.

4. It was noted by one delegation that the increase of flows from some regions and countries necessitated greater cooperation with both countries of origin and transit countries. Several delegations stated that cooperation should be expanded and formalized with a larger number of memoranda of understanding; some other delegations stated that cooperation and the conclusion of such memoranda should include organizations outside the United Nations system, such as the International Organization for Migration.

5. In the area of human rights, the collaboration of UNHCR with the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations system was noted; however, several delegations expressed disappointment that the memorandum of understanding with the Centre for Human Rights had not been finalized. Delegations were encouraged by the contribution of UNHCR to the system-wide early-warning system; a number were concerned, however, by the lack of a coherent international mechanism in the collection and dissemination of information. One delegation stressed that UNHCR would benefit from an early-warning capacity and, for that reason, had a responsibility in the development of an international mechanism. One delegation regretted that it was given no precise information on the development of the common working group.

6. Several delegations stressed, in regard to recommendation 6, that any agreement with non-governmental organizations in their relations with UNHCR should fully respect the relevant legislative basis.

7. Regarding programming and administrative controls, delegations noted the progress accomplished. Several delegations stressed that administrative controls of implementing partners should be strengthened, and that assessments of their capacity should be centrally maintained by UNHCR for internal purposes. Delegations noted support provided by UNHCR to implementing partners through training organized at the regional and local levels; a number of delegations stated that this effort benefiting implementing partners and local authorities needed to be increased, in particular with regard to refugee law.

8. Some delegations called attention to the need to fully respect the principle of equitable geographical distribution in contracting personnel, including those contracted on secondment.

9. Many delegations were concerned by the apparent lack of progress in the training of UNHCR staff. Several delegations stated that they were encouraged by the attention given by UNHCR to strategic planning; one delegation observed that UNHCR should ensure that its policies and guidelines were better reflected in its country programmes.

10. Some delegations regretted the use in the Spanish version of the report of the word intervención in reference to the participation of UNHCR in certain activities (paras. 4 and 5) and requested its replacement by the word participación. In this connection, they also requested that the words intervención rápida in paragraph 9 be replaced by the words respuesta rápida.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee expressed appreciation for the report, which it found to be comprehensive.

12. The Committee noted that its recommendations had helped UNHCR to improve its effectiveness.

13. The Committee recommended that the triennial review, together with the Committee's discussion and its conclusions and recommendations thereon, should be submitted to the Executive Committee of UNHCR for its consideration and appropriate action.

14. The Committee took note of the report and recommended that follow-up action on the issues raised in it should be taken by UNHCR and other relevant organizations, and that oversight review of those actions should be undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as appropriate, as part of its overall internal oversight function.